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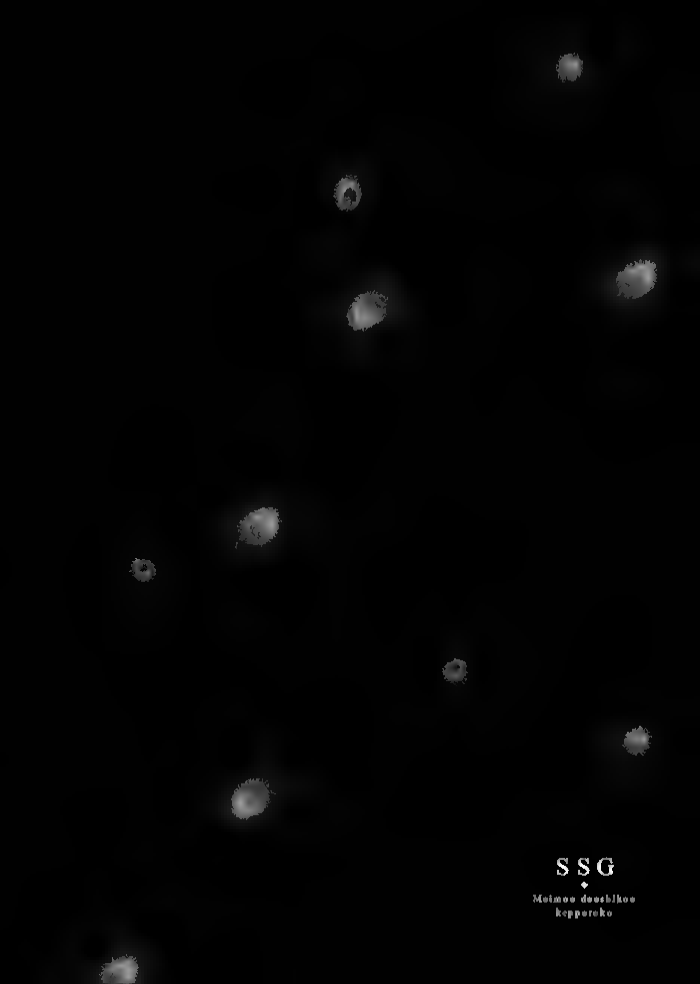
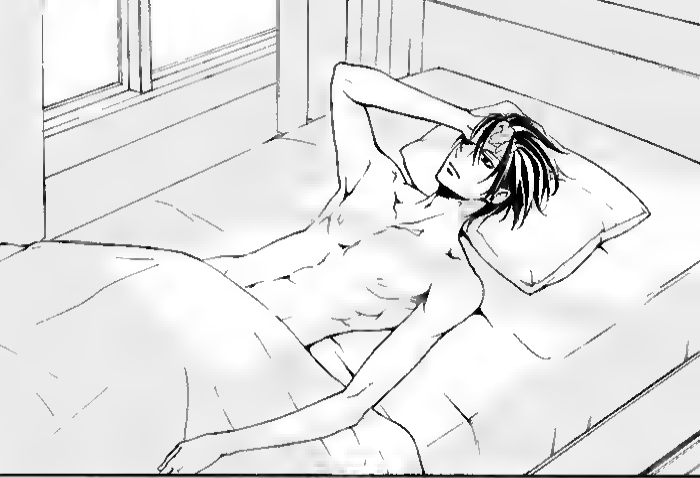
#9


SSG
Meimoo doosbikoo
kepporeko



SFX: SPLASH

MORNING, GOKOKUJI
pat
blush
...
walk
...
walk
walk
WHAT'S UP WITH HIM...?
OH OTOWA
DON'T GET CLOSE TO ME

GOOD MORNING, OTOWA.
KANDA, GOOD MORNING
AREN'T YOU HERE EARLIER THAN USUAL?
YEAH
I THOUGHT IT WAS ABOUT TIME TO TAKE THE MORNING PRACTICES FOR THE SPORTS FESTIVAL SERIOUSLY
HEH, YOU'RE SO INTO IT
WELL, YEAH. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE TO SATSUMA'S GROUP — NO, THE WHOLE 2ND DORM

...FOR SOME REASON
IT'S STRANGE
I feel... like Gokokuji and I's eyes just met...
but he averted his gaze?
HMPH.
NO,
IT'S NOTHING
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

SUBARU, MORNING!
HONGOU-KUN.
Your face is too close.
Why are you in my class room?
EHE HE! <3
I CAME TO SEE YOU!

SFX NUDGE 2X
HEY, KANDA, DON'T ACT SO OVERLY FAMILIAR WITH SUBARU
HUH?
IT'S NOT LIKE OTOWA IS EXCLU-SIVELY YOURS, RIGHT?

EH? BUT HE IS.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'M HEARING THAT
YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT, KANDA?
WHAT'S THAT?! I'M NOT REALLY HONGOU-KUN'S?!

SFX SWOOSH
run
KUDAN, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT OTOWA.
WHAT? COME AGAIN, GENERAL?
NO... IT'S JUST THAT HE'S NICE.
HUH?

I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WANT HIM...
YEAH...
OTOWA'S GOOD, RIGHT?
RIGHT?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT, BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WINNING THE SPORTS FESTIVAL AND TAKING OTOWA AS OUR PRIZE?
SOUNDS GOOD I LIKE THAT IDEA.

*T/N A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CHILDREN'S GAME. THE GAME IS SIMILAR TO THE GAME RED ROVER. IT'S OFTEN PLAYED IN KINDERGARTENS AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THE CHILDREN SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS AND THE MEMBERS OF EACH GROUP HOLD HANDS AND THE TEAMS FACE EACH OTHER IN TWO LINES. ONE GROUP STEPS TOWARD THE OTHER TO THE BEAT OF A SONG THAT IS USED ONLY FOR THE GAME AND THE OTHER STEPS BACK SO THAT THE TEAM LINES REMAIN PARALLEL.

INSTEAD OUR MOST FORMIDABLE ENEMY IS THE 3RD DORM
THE SHIN-SENGUMI ISN'T OUR ONLY ENEMY
WHAT TAKEBASHI'S TRYING TO SAY IS THAT...

Bzzz
Bzz
Bzz
SLAM
CHOU-SHUU...?

HELLO...?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ONII-CHAN?
Onii-chan...
sigh
I JUST WANTED TO HEAR YOUR VOICE...
WHAT'S... THAT ABOUT...?
ONII-CHAN...
SORRY... IT'S MY FAULT...
YOU KNOW YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL ME IF SOMETHING HAPPENS.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, I GUESS...
FOR SOME REASON... YOU'RE TALKING JUST LIKE A MAN...

YOU KNOW...
How should I tell onii-chan that I was Kondou Isami in my previous life...?
Hmm? Wait a minute.. I entered this school as onii-chan's replacement..
I...
YEAH...
SO MANY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED! I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO TALK ABOUT.
ARE YOU OKAY?
So maybe the previous life isn't mine.. but onii-chan's...
HEY... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
ARE YOU OKAY?
AAH... YEAH. I'M FINE
BUT... WHEN WE MEET UP AGAIN, I HAVE A LOT OF THINGS I WANT TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOU, SO PLEASE LISTEN TO ME THEN
I WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON...
SURE
WE'LL MEET UP DURING SUMMER BREAK...?

SFX: OPEN
SFX: RUSTLE
?
WHERE ARE YOU PLANNING TO GO?
TO KASUGA-SENPAI'S PLACE FOR A BIT...
DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH HIM?

FOR A RUN.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
That aside, I need to get to senpai's room to ask him—
Yeah— I don't need to worry about it
What's with.. Gokokuji ...
..Well... he's been weird from the start
He's acting weird.
KASUGA
TSUBAKIYAMA
ding dong
HMM? WHAT'S WRONG, OTOWA?

PREVIOUS LIVES IN THE CASE OF TWINS?
YES,
I SUDDENLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT
TWINS HAVE THE SAME FACE AND GENES, RIGHT?
THEN, DOES THAT MEAN THEY SHARE THE SAME PAST LIFE ?
LIKE AREN'T YOU ALL MAKING A MISTAKE ?
BECAUSE THE DOOR OPENED
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
THAT'S A FOOLISH QUESTION IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET IT WRONG

THE DOOR INSIDE THE TOWER WHEN YOU FIRST CAME...
THOSE DOORS DON'T OPEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PREVIOUS LIFE.
ALSO...
THE DIRECTOR CONTACTS US IN ADVANCE WITH INFORMATION ON THOSE ENTERING OUR SCHOOL WITH A PREVIOUS LIFE
THEN, HE TOLD YOU ABOUT ME TOO?
THAT'S RIGHT...
HE CONTACTED US AND TOLD US THAT KONDOU-SAN WAS COMING.
...
HOW DOES THE DIRECTOR KNOW...?
THERE'S A RUMOR THAT HE JUDGES IF A PERSON HAS A PREVIOUS LIFE OR NOT DURING THE ENTRANCE INTERVIEW
IT'S BECAUSE

OTOWA.
THERE'S NO REASON TO FEEL ANXIOUS JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE A TWIN.
WE CAN RECOGNIZE THE PREVIOUS LIVES OF THOSE AROUND US
WE CAN TELL WHO WE WERE IN OUR PREVIOUS LIFE OURSELVES AND
That was obvious
SUBARU-CHAN, YOU HAVE THAT TWIN AURA
EEH!
HOW DID YOU FIGURE OUT I WAS A TWIN?
YES...
Fufu
Well, it would've been exposed sooner or later anyway...
I'm glad I told them...
Ahaha...
YOU'RE KONDOU-SAN THERE'S NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT
SO WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE CASE THAT YOU WERE A TWIN
BECAUSE YOU SUDDENLY ASKED US ABOUT PREVIOUS LIVES IN THE CASE OF TWINS,

KASUGA-SENPAI...
WE BELIEVE THAT, SO YOU CAN BE AT EASE.
...RIGHT...
It's funny, but I'm happy...
So I'm Kondou... Should I be relieved ...?

MORNING...
yawn
NNG
Be-be-be-beep
be-be-beep
beep
bam
6:30
Where did he go so early in the morning...? It's Saturday today, too.
Gokokuji... isn't here.
look around
look around
WHAT'S THE MATTE, SUBARU?
BEATS ME. ISN'T IT JUST BECAUSE HE'S IN HIGH SPIRITS BECAUSE THE SPORTS FESTIVAL IS COMING UP SOON?
HE'S OUT ON A RUN.
SHUN?
HUH? WHY?
Morning!
HONGOU-KUN..

I need to work hard, too... I'm the leader, after all.
That's right. The sports festival is coming up soon...
HE'S OUR ACE, AFTER ALL.
I SEE...
zip
Everyone believes in me...
!!
Onkokuji...
Happily
Sigh
There he is..!

GUESS WHO!
Huh? He doesn't know?
...

...AH,
SORRY... THAT... YOU'RE BEING SERIOUS
AND I'M JUST MESSING AROUND
THAT'S NOT...
STOP...
WITH THOSE KINDS OF THINGS...

pant
I thought Gokokuji was just acting weird, but
pant
THAT WAS RATHER SHOCKING
pant
Thanks to my own thick-headed-ness..
drip
drip
he probably just hates me.
If I think about it...
THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON
Surely it's because... I, Otowa Subaru, am not good enough to be Kondou Isami

SFX: POUR
DAMN IT...
squeak

TAKERU-SAN...
WHAT DID YOU DO, SHUN?
AFTER RUNNING LIKE CRAZY FOR THAT LONG AND THEN SHOWERING IN COLD WATER.
DO YOU WANT TO DAMAGE YOUR BODY?
SFX: THROW
I'M... STRANGE...
WELL YOU'RE DEFINITELY A BIT WEIRD
YOU'RE TOO SERIOUS
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT WHICHEVER WAY I THINK ABOUT THIS
?

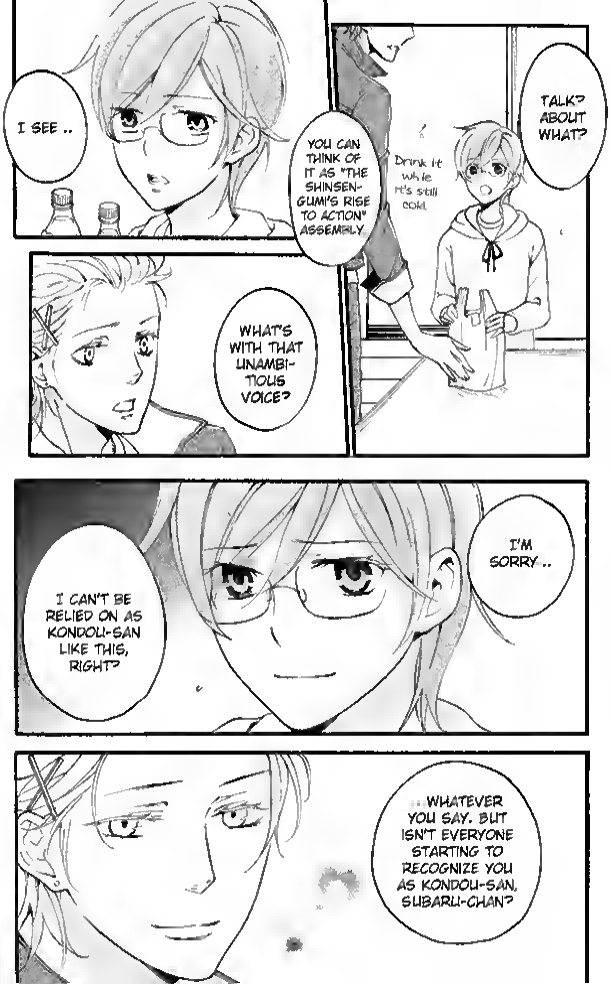
WAIT, WAIT.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ANYMORE BESIDES RUN...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WONDERING WHO HE'S TALKING TO ON THE PHONE WHILE I'M STRETCHING MY EARS TO LISTEN
I'M NOT HAPPY IF SOMEONE ELSE TOUCHES HIM...
BEFORE I EVEN NOTICE IT. MY EYES ARE ALWAYS FOLLOWING HIM
I'M SAYING THAT MAYBE I LIKE OTOWA!
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT?
BUT STILL WHEN HE COMES CLOSE TO ME I BECOME STUNNED AND ACT COLDLY
silence
drop

IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM LOYALTY. THAT'S WHY I'M TROUBLED
YOU'VE FINALLY FOUND KONDOU-SAN
HEH
ISN'T THAT JUST YOUR LOYALTY AS HIJIKATA THAT YOU'RE FEELING?
THIS IS AN ALL-BOYS SCHOOL.
I KNOW THAT! THAT'S WHY I'M WORRIED
THEN, MAYBE IT'S THAT
DURING PUBERTY, PEOPLE WHO GET ALONG WELL AND LIVE TOGETHER
OFTEN MISTAKE THESE FEELINGS FOR LOVE THAT'S PROBABLY IT

TAKERU-SAN?
NO, I DIDN'T.
IS THAT SO? TAKERU-SAN, YOU HAD A TIME WHEN YOU FELT LIKE THAT TOO?
I CAN'T ANSWER THAT FOR YOU
AS I THOUGHT... IS THIS LOVE AFTER ALL?
NO WAY ...
Hahaha
JUST WENT OFF FOR A BIT SOME-WHERE
WHERE DID YOU GO?
SHUN, TAKE-RU!
AH,

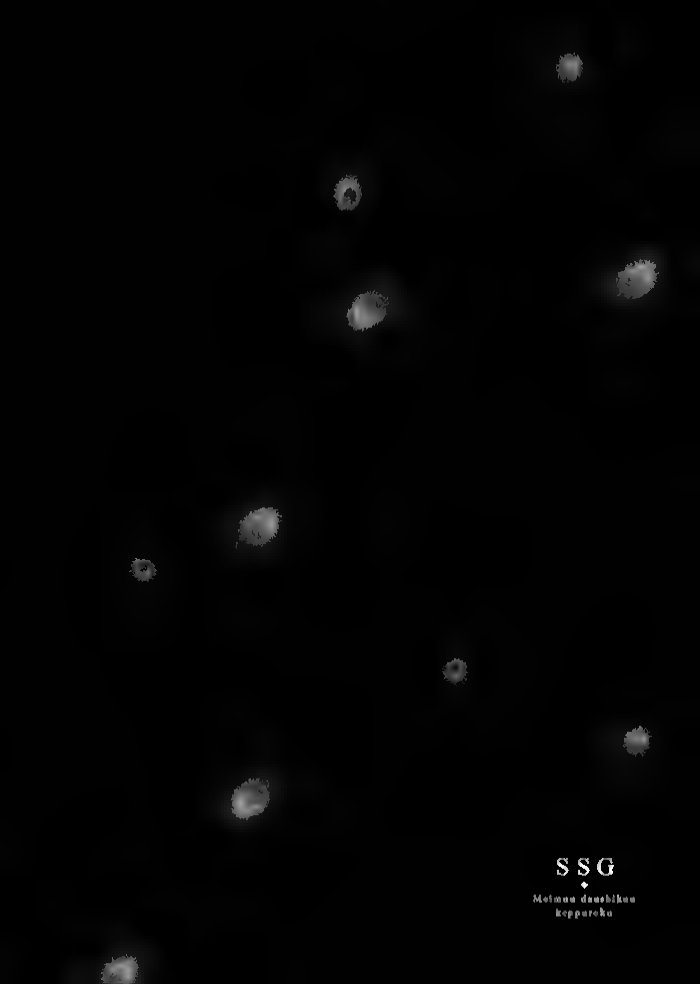
I NEED TO TALK WITH EVERYONE, SO COME ON!
WHAT IS IT?
I WANT TO APOLOGIZE PROPERLY TO SUBARU
FOR WHAT I'VE DONE SO FAR
SOUTA
I THOUGHT I'D LIKE EVERYONE TO BE PRESENT
...

op
en
YES?
knock
knock
201
I brought juice for us.
OH, YOU'RE ALONE?
TSUBA-KIYAMA-SENPAI!
I DON'T KNOW... HE'S PROBABLY HANGING AROUND SOMEWHERE...
WHAT ABOUT SHUN?
YES...
HE TOLD ME TO GATHER YOU
SOUTA WANTS TO TALK WITH EVERYONE SO
I HAVE BUSINESS WITH BOTH OF YOU
DID YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH GOKOKUJI?
?
WELL, THAT'S FINE.
I SEE...


I SEE ..
YOU CAN THINK OF IT AS "THE SHINSEN-GUMI'S RISE TO ACTION" ASSEMBLY.
Drink it while it's still cold.
TALK? ABOUT WHAT?
WHAT'S WITH THAT UNAMBI-TIOUS VOICE?
I CAN'T BE RELIED ON AS KONDOU-SAN LIKE THIS, RIGHT?
I'M SORRY ..
WHATEVER YOU SAY. BUT ISN'T EVERYONE STARTING TO RECOGNIZE YOU AS KONDOU-SAN, SUBARU-CHAN?

YOU THINK SO...?
THAT'S RIGHT... THE SHIN-SENGUMI FINALLY FEELS MONOLITHIC.
SO MAYBE
IT'S A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO CONFIRM IT NOW...
...?
SFX SLAM
WAH...!
drop
WH...AT...?

I'VE BEEN WONDERING ALL THIS TIME, BUT
WHY'S THERE A WOMAN HERE?
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 3


SSG
Meinau daushikun
keppureku

このたびは『SSG』2巻をお求めいただき、どうもありがとうございます！ こうして無事2巻目を発行していただけたのは、読者の皆さまのご声援はもとより、ARIA編集部の担当H塚さんM山さん、編集長・T屋さん、副編集長・K形さん、営業ご担当様ほか多くの方々のおかげです。いつもいつも、どうもありがとうございます！ 空らぬ櫻井ですが、がんばりますのでどうかこれからもよろしくお願いいたします。名和田さん、クールでかっこいいデザインをいつもどうもありがとうございます！ タイトルの文字は刀で斬ったようなイメージとうかがっていて、さすがと思っていたのですが、今回の神田とタイトルの配置が絶妙で嬉しくて悲鳴あげました（笑）。

さて、物語のほうもだんだん仕境に入って参りました。今回は薩摩藩・第二寮をフィーチャリング。九段のキャラデザをするに当たり、担当さんからは砂漠王シークのように！ との要望がありまして、あのような浅黒天パの風貌と相成りました。ちなみに九段の愛用品は純金の喜平ネックレスとナイル川産の極上クロコダイルベルトです。ワイングラスに麦茶を入れるのが九段流です。

次巻は第三寮が登場予定です。今後もどんどん盛り上がっていく予定ですので、連載中のARIA本誌ともども、どうぞよろしくお願いします！ ご感想やご要望もぜひお聞かせください。

櫻井しゅしゅ

Special Thanks ◆ Uten Hama Tsuta, Hga-Khata, Hmitsu, And you

* A RESTAURANT EMPLOYEE WHO ORDERS AND MAINTAINS THE WINES SOLD IN THE RESTAURANT AND USUALLY HAS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WINE AND FOOD PAIRINGS

** YAKISOBA IS A FRIED NOODLE MADE FROM WHEAT FLOUR

SHORT SPRING

WITH THIS, VOLUME 2 IS AT ITS END.

UN-AGITATED TAKEBASHI

*T/N: SENSITIVE TO HOT FOOD